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TAGS: PREL MARR KCFE NATO ML
SUBJECT: NAC-MOLDOVA CONSULTATIONS JULY 4 FOCUS ON
TRANSNISTRIA AND DEFENSE REFORM

REF: A. MOLDOVA'S IPAP DOCUMENT (E-MAILED TO EUR/RPM)
1B. USNATO 013107

Classified By: Charge Ian Kelly for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

SUMMARY

11. (C) Molodvan FM Stratan and Acting DefMin Ion Coropcean consulted with the North Atlantic Council (NAC) on Moldova's Individual Partnership Action Plan July 4. NATO SYG de Hoop Scheffer said that Moldova had made a good start, but strategic concepts still needed to be defined to guide the more intense implementation work to follow. Separatist Transnistria drew considerable attention from the nuts and bolts of defense reform issues, with Stratan calling for the introduction of a civilian international mission under international mandate. He, along with Allies, committed to continue working through the "5 2" format (including the U.S. and EU, along with the OSCE, Russia, Ukraine, and the two parties to the dispute), and to continue to insist on the withdrawal of Russian troops. End Summary.

FROM PLANNING TO IMPLEMENTATION

12. (C) NATO PermReps engaged Molodvan Foreign Minister (Deputy Prime Minister) Andrei Stratan and Acting Defense Minister Ion Coropcean on Moldova's Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP - REF A) implementation on July 4. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer recalled that

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Moldova's IPAP process began with President Voronin's meeting with the NAC in June 2005, and that the current meeting drew on the findings of a March 2007 NATO expert team's assessments of the plan's implementation. (NOTE: Stratan and then-DefMin Plesca last met with the NAC on January 31 - REF B.) The SYG previewed the Moldovans' presentation by noting that they had made a good start on the IPAP by setting up requisite administrative structures and working on an overarching National Security Concept (NSC), but that the NSC still needed to be completed and the political will mobilized to begin putting the ambitious plan into action.

FOCUS ON TRANSNISTRIA

13. (C) On Transnistria, FM Stratan thanked Allies for their "support and cohesion" at the Vienna CFE Conference that had "provided confidence to nations in the former Soviet space." He pledged to keep pressing to address the issue through the "5 2" framework (the U.S. and EU included as observers of the "3 2" Russian, Ukrainian, and OSCE mediation of Moldova-Transnistria negotiations). Stratan strongly denied "rumors and hearsay" that Moldova was negotiating a bilateral agreement with Russia on Transnistria. President Voronin's

meeting with President Putin had naturally addressed Transnistria, he said, recalling that Voronin had briefed the U.S., Russia, Ukraine, EU member states, and OSCE and COE representatives on those talks on June 22. He said that Moscow had agreed to convene the 52 "soon." In response to numerous questions about possible peacekeeping formulae for Transnistria, he specified that Moldova wanted to replace the current Russian peacekeeping troops with "a civilian international mission under international mandate."

IPAP IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

¶4. (C) On the IPAP, he expressed satisfaction with NATO's cooperation and regular, high-level consultations. He said the IPAP process represented a clear political message of Moldova's firm commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration and that its defense structures would be "based on Western standards" while "in conformity with Moldovan neutrality." He insisted that Moldova's reforms were already irreversible.

Noting that it was the U.S. Independence Day, he expressed appreciation for our "bilateral security and defense assistance, constant support on Transnistria and other problems." Stratan also acknowledged the support of the U.S. Partnership Training Center in Monterey and bilateral assistance from Latvia (a defense adviser), the UK (defense equipment inventory), and the EU (energy and agriculture support). Acknowledging that the NSC document which is to underlie Moldova's national security and military strategies had not been completed on schedule, he urged Allies "to avoid reciprocal blaming" (the only sour note in either of the Ministers' presentations. A/DM Coropcean focused his remarks on substantive issues of defense reform: the drafting of the Strategic Defense Review, Moldova's initial participation in the EUCOM-coordinated South East Europe Clearinghouse mechanism, and advances in defense planning and budgeting processes.

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U.S.) HOLD THE COURSE, BUILD SOME STEAM

¶5. (C) Allied comments were positive but measured, highlighting the substantial IPAP implementation work still ahead for Moldova. U.S. Charge Ian Kelly saluted Moldova's solidarity in Iraq, noting that it had recently dispatched its fifth contingent of soldiers (eight engineers and three staff officers taking part in explosives disposal operations). He focused his comments on the need to strengthen Moldova's commitment to defense reform and holding the course on Transnistria.

ALLIES) FOCUS ON TRANSNISTRIA

¶6. (C) Romania, representing NATO's Contact Point Embassy in Moldova, said Moldova had "tested its capacity and will" in the IPAP process and stressed that stronger political will and high level engagement was necessary to move forward. Romania called for placing priority on completing Moldova's strategic planning documents and launching a public diplomacy task force. (Romania has underwritten a NATO Information Center to be opened in Chisinau this Autumn.) Spain, speaking for the OSCE, commented on Moldova's electoral performance, and probed for Moldovan ideas for replacing current Transnistria peacekeeping arrangements. Germany argued that there would be little utility in contemplating changes in the current Transnistria peacekeeping force without an overarching settlement of the dispute, and also spotlighted the need to put more effort into combating domestic corruption. The Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, and Poland followed in similar veins. Stratan and Coropcean addressed those and a range of more detailed questions. The SYG concluded the meeting by pointing to the genuine interest of Allies in Moldova's security concerns and a call for vigorous action on defense reforms.

KELLY